

VZCZCXYZ0001
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSG #0061/01 0211139
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 211139Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4290
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 3727
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2256
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1242
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0639
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1916
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 5913
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4187
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2079
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000061

SIPDIS

STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [EFIN](#) [CI](#)
SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - JANUARY 17-20

Leading Stories

1. Chilean dailies gave extensive coverage to inauguration preparations in Washington and President-elect Obama's activities. Newspapers also highlighted Israel's cease fire in Gaza and the arrest of Chile's Air Force (FACH) retired General Ramon Vega for allegedly receiving illegal payments during the purchase of Belgian fighter jets in 1994.

U.S.-Related News

2. Chilean newspapers noted President-elect Barack Obama's remarks on Latin American and Hugo Chavez during an interview with Univision TV last week. In response to questions about Obama's remarks, OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza underscored that "Obama has no interest in getting into a fight with President Chavez. President Chavez is campaigning for his referendum, and naturally, he has taken on this issue" (El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, circ. 129,000, 1/19).

3. Column by Chilean Ambassador to the U.S. Mariano Fernandez on the atmosphere in Washington preceding Inauguration Day entitled, "The Celebration in Washington." "It will be a truly historic moment for democracy.... One perceives emotion, admiration, and pride.... The first power is preparing to leave a very difficult time behind (as it is expected by everybody) and begin a new era of resurgence headed by Obama and his Administration. That is the perception today in Washington..." (La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 1/18).

4. Americas Quarterly's latest edition carried a special edition featuring comments by 31 leaders in the Hemisphere on the upcoming Obama Administration. President Michelle Bachelet and businessman Andronico Luksic contributed. President Bachelet said, "If institutions are not democratized and redesigned in order to reflect the diverse and complex political environment, they will not be capable of providing the kind of government that we need for the 21st Century." Andronico Luksic suggested changes in three areas, notably an "extensive review" of the Cuban embargo, immigration, and promotion of stalled trade agreements (La Segunda, conservative, afternoon daily, circ. 33,000, 1/16).

5. As of January 1, Chile should have adhered to the UPOV 1991 Act of the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, as stated in the bilateral Free Trade Agreement with the United States. Attorney Jaime Silva noted that the issue hasn't been

given legislative priority, which suggests "that it is a matter of low political priority in the country" (El Mercurio, 1/19).

¶6. U.S. Ambassador to Chile Paul Simons visited the Maipu District in Santiago to seek future cooperation opportunities. Maipu Mayor Alberto Undurraga pointed out that "it is not usual for ambassadors to visit municipalities; we are excited that he is interested in learning about our work and projects" (El Mercurio, 1/19).

Chile-Other Countries

¶7. The Executive Branch is preparing a draft bill aimed at granting Chile's Internal Revenue Service with access to banking accounts and deposits. The initiative seeks to comply with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) requirements in this area (La Tercera, 1/18).

Local

¶8. Chile's Air Force (FACH) retired General Ramon Vega and other three high-ranking retired officers were arrested January 19 for allegedly receiving US\$ 15 million dollars in illegal payments during the purchase of Belgian fighter jets in 1994 (All dailies, 1/20).

¶9. The Public Ministry prepared a new strategy to stop the surge of recent bombings and bomb threats in Santiago and other cities. Prosecutor Xavier Armendariz was appointed exclusively to investigate the attacks (El Mercurio, 1/17).

¶10. Christian Democratic Presidential candidate Eduardo Frei was officially proclaimed Presidential candidate by the Socialist Party in an event that had a poor turnout. Of the 1,129 delegates expected to attend, only 350 showed-up (La Tercera, 1/18). Eduardo Frei gave the first speech in his presidential campaign to the Socialist Party's National Convention. In his remarks he sought to connect with the far-left in the Government coalition by defending the role of the State in times of crisis such as the current one (El Mercurio, 1/18).

Editorials

¶11. Editorial piece entitled, "Historic Change of Power at the White House" "The new President has been elected to protect the country's interests; therefore one should not expect a strong thump at the helm, even on issues such as Iraq and Afghanistan. It could frustrate the hopes of those who dream of a new United States" (La Tercera, 1/20).

¶12. Column by Former Foreign Minister Hernan Felipe Errazuriz, "Obama and the U.S." "Obama's ability to change the United States and the U.S.' power to change the world are limited" (El Mercurio, 1/17).

¶13. Opinion piece by OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza, "The Challenges of the New U.S. President" "To truly go into history as a great President, Obama needs to face four enormous challenges. First, he must comply with the promise of equality established by the Civil Rights Movement.... Second, Obama came to power through the hands of many people who saw in him the hope to end the war in Iraq and, more generally, to substantially change the U.S. foreign policy and to create a new era of peace by exerting global moral and political leadership, rather than military.... Third... the entire world expects to see how he reduces the deficit while rescuing the financial system, eluding unemployment and putting the economy at work.... Fourth, the alarm caused by global warming continues. There is little time to negotiate agreements to outstrip the Kyoto goals and significantly reduce emissions.... Latin America -- which also is living a period of profound changes -- expects from Obama a closer dialogue and a truly collaborative attitude.... We hope that for the good of the world, Obama succeeds in his struggle against the crisis, the war, discrimination and environmental damages. We wish to see from him true willingness to address the issues in our shared agenda (economic crisis, trade, migration, global warming, drug trafficking, and Cuba -- yes, also Cuba) without prejudice and by listening to everybody's interests" (La Tercera 1/20).

¶14. Editorial entitled, "Barack Obama" "Globally, there is a variety of expectations, but its axis is the establishment of better international relations. One of the heaviest burdens left by Bush is the sentiments against the United States caused by Bush's international policy.... With the arrival of this lawyer to the White House, there is a ray of hope for a better world order and a more integrated United States" (Diario Financiero, business and financial, circ. 30,000, 1/20).

SIMONS